

DNREC's First State Heritage Park's lantern tours to light up Fridays this spring

DOVER – DNREC's First State Heritage Park will offer lantern tours of The Green and three historic Dover cemeteries at 8 p.m. Fridays from April 5 – June 7. Take a walk through Dover's history by the light of a lantern on one of four different evening tours offered by the park.

- **Lantern Tour of The Green**

8 p.m. Fridays, April 5, May 3, and 17

Join historical interpreters from the First State Heritage Park dressed in colonial attire as they tell the stories of historic Dover. Dover's public square was the site of markets and fairs, suffragists and abolitionists, soldiers and slaves, lawmakers and law breakers. Hear tales of devastating fires that threatened the town, of poisonings, and of tragic love.

- **Christ Episcopal Church cemetery**

8 p.m. Friday, May 10

Encounter characters from the past to hear tales of the tombstones, along with stories of joy and sorrow about those who were laid to rest within the walls of the churchyard. From Caesar Rodney's unrequited love, to Civil War opponents buried within yards of one another, be prepared for a surprise or two on this unique tour.

- **Old Wesley United Methodist Church cemetery**

8:00 Friday, May 24; 8:30 June 7

In a new lantern tour, the stories of those buried in Wesley United Methodist Church's cemetery help reveal the meanings behind the elaborate rituals associated with death and mourning in the 19th century. Uncover the meanings of the carefully-crafted funeral art that decorates the tombstones of the high and low classes

alike, and what those symbols might reveal about the people buried beneath them. Varied and often unusual funerary customs of the Victorian era, including mourning clothes, will be revealed by an undertaker and a grieving widow.

▪ **Presbyterian Church of Dover cemetery**

8 p.m. Friday, May 31

Visit by lantern light the Presbyterian Church of Dover's historic cemetery, where many prominent Delawareans and their families are buried. Among them is Delaware's great statesman John M. Clayton and Revolutionary War martyr Colonel John Haslet, who died a hero's death at the Battle of Princeton in 1777. Meet these figures from Dover history, along with Revolutionary War hero Major John Patton, 19th-century Dover's James Fulton, who was the first resident of Rose Cottage, and several 18th-century Dover widows with decided opinions about their husbands.

Admission to all lantern tours is \$10. All April and May Friday tours begin at 8 p.m. The June 7 tour begins at 8:30 p.m. Space is limited; call 302-739-9194 to reserve your lantern. Lantern tours cancelled due to inclement weather will not be rescheduled. The churchyard tours are made possible with the cooperation of the Presbyterian Church of Dover, Christ Episcopal Church, and Wesley United Methodist Church.

First State Heritage Park is Delaware's first urban "park without boundaries" linking historic and cultural sites in the city that has been the seat of state government since 1777. The park is a partnership of state agencies under the leadership of DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation, working in collaboration with city and county government, nonprofit organizations and the private sector. For more information, visit www.destateparks.com/heritagepark.

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